

PROGRAM GUIDE
DRS/SBVI 04-07
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TO: All DRS/SBVI Offices

SUBJECT: Appropriate Division for Referrals

This Program Guide provides written direction and policy for the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) personnel when determining which division would be more appropriate to serve an individual who is interested in applying for services. It is not uncommon that applicants to either division have multiple disabilities, including visual impairments. The purpose of this program guide is to ensure that, in accordance with CFR 361.41, referrals such as these are handled in a prompt and equitable manner, and that applicants and eligible individuals will be working with the division that can more appropriately serve them.

Guidance on how to determine the appropriate division for an individual

If an applicant claims to have a visual impairment that is an impediment to employment, the applicant should submit his/her application to SBVI. Applicants without visual impairments should be directed to apply with DRS. If there is a question regarding which division should take an application on an individual, the DRS and SBVI supervisors will jointly determine which agency may be more appropriate to serve the consumer.

There may be instances during an intake interview where disability information may warrant that the individual apply with the other division. At the point during the interview that it is discovered that the other division would be more appropriate for the applicant, an attempt should be made to allow the correct division to conduct the interview. If a staff person from the other division is not available to conduct the interview, the application should be done as planned and a consultation with the other division's staff person should be arranged as soon as possible after the interview. All attempts should be made to enter the application and intake information on the case management system under the correct division.

If a DRS applicant or eligible consumer is determined to have a visual impairment that constitutes an impediment to employment, the individual should be transferred to an SBVI caseload. In situations where it is not easily identified whether or not a visual impairment is an impediment to employment, the DRS counselor shall first consult with his/her supervisor and the SBVI supervisor regarding the case. If it is determined that the case should be transferred to SBVI after the case was entered on the case management system, the case management system manager shall be contacted and the transfer will be completed at the state office level.

Likewise, an SBVI applicant who is determined to be ineligible for services based on their visual impairment should be transferred to DRS if other disabilities are present that may constitute an impediment to employment. Once again, if the case was entered on the case management system, the

case management system manager shall be contacted and the transfer will be completed at the state office level.

Applicants with Disabilities to Include Visual Impairments That Are Progressive in Nature

There are causes of blindness where, if proper medical procedures are taken, the progressive nature of the disease can be slowed and a person's remaining eyesight may be preserved. In instances where an applicant who has other disabilities that are impediments also has a visual impairment that is not an impediment to employment but is progressive in nature, the SBVI supervisor should be consulted. In these situations, the individual may still be considered eligible for SBVI services. Applicants who have no impediment to employment will not be eligible for services regardless of the progressive nature of their disability.

If there are any questions on this program guide, please contact Eric Weiss.